

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6955
INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BOGOTA 2547

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PN, CO, US
SUBJ: LOPEZ RECONFIRMS COLOMBIAN INTEREST IN PANAMA CANAL AND
TREATIES

REF: BOGOTA 2479

1. IN A MARCH 16 TELEVISION INTERVIEW FOCUSSED ON THE PANAMA CANAL AND DRUG TRAFFICKING (SEPTTEL), PRESIDENT LOPEZ RECONFIRMED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CANAL TREATIES, ESPECIALLY AS THEY AFFECTED COLOMBIAN INTERESTS AND RIGHTS IN THE WATERWAY. WHILE HE DID NOT REFER TO THE EMBASSY'S RECENT NOTE (REFTEL) REGARDING COLOMBIA'S TRANSIT RIGHTS IN THE CANAL, HE DID STRESS THAT COLOMBIAN INTERESTS WOULD BE PROTECTED BY AGREEMENTS WITH PANAMA.

2. THE PRESIDENT ALSO NOTED COLOMBIA'S ROLE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE CANAL TREATIES NOW BEFORE THE US SENATE, AND EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAD DEVELOPED BETWEEN COLOMBIA'S EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THE US CONGRESS AS A RESULT OF SEVERAL CONGRESSIONAL VISITS TO BOGOTA. LOPEZ ADDED THAT HE HOPED THAT THIS RELATIONSHIP WOULD LEAD TO US SENATE RATIFICATION OF ANOTHER TREATY-THAT CONCERNING QUITA SUENO.

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3. IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR THE NIGHT BEFORE, LOPEZ WAS VERY UPBEAT, REFERRING TO THE CANAL TREATIES IN THEIR POTENTIAL EFFECT ON US-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE TO FACE THE US SENATE SINCE THE QUESTION OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

4. COMMENT: LOPEZ IN THE PAST HAS PRAISED U.S. EFFORTS TOWARD

REACHING AGREEMENT WITH PANAMA OVER THE CANAL. IN HIS TELEVISED
INTERVIEW, HE CALLED THE U.S. ATTITUDE ONE OF "UNDERSTANDING."
HIS MENTION OF THE QUITA SUENO TREATY IS IN KEEPING WITH HIS
ADMINISTRATION'S HIGH-PRIORITY EFFORTS TO DELINEATE ALL OF
COLOMBIA'S MARITIME BOUNDARIES.
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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 17 mar 1978
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